

**REMARKS**

Claims 2-5 and 16-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2-5 and 16 are amended, and claims 17-20 are added. Support for the amendment to claims 2-5 and 16 can be found in the specification, for example, at paragraph [0056] and Figure 3. Support for new claims 17-20 can be found in the specification, for example, at paragraph [0022]. No new matter is added. Claims 1 and 15 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Katsuragi et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0008725, hereinafter "Katsuragi") in view of Sugiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,388,115, hereinafter "Sugiyama"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The applied references would not have rendered obvious, in combination, every feature of independent claims 2, 4, 5 and 16. For example, the applied references would not have reasonably suggested with enabling specificity "the suction unit including a pump...suctioning the first solvent from the liquid droplet ejection head by the pump of the suction unit," as recited in independent claims 2 and 16, and as similarly recited in independent claims 4 and 5.

The Office Action, pages 2 and 3, asserts that because Katsuragi discloses water being forced out of the ink-jet head, there exists some suction (even if only on the molecular level), which serves to draw the water through the ink-jet head. However, Katsuragi does not disclose a suction unit including a pump, the pump suctioning a first solvent from a liquid droplet ejection head. Therefore, Katsuragi does not teach, and would not have rendered obvious, the combinations of all of the claim features of independent claims 2, 4, 5 and 16.

Further, Sugiyama does not remedy the above-described deficiency in the application of Katsuragi to the subject matter of independent claims 2, 4, 5 and 16.

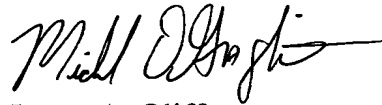
For at least these reasons, independent claims 2, 4, 5 and 16 are patentable over the applied references. Claims 3 and 17-20 are also patentable over the applied references for at least their dependence on independent claims 2 or 16, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-5 and 16-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:  
Request for Continued Examination

Date: April 14, 2010

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